

FACT SHEET



Omaha Lead Site Omaha, Nebraska

May 2001

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 7 has resumed testing yard soil at child care facilities and residences of children with elevated blood levels (EBL). EPA has previously tested 343 child cares and 137 EBL properties and has cleaned up all of those with soil lead levels more than 400 parts per million (ppm).

This new round of testing will be used to evaluate the need to clean up new child cares and EBL properties. In addition, a few residential properties will be tested to fill gaps that remain in the investigation of the Omaha Lead Site.

CHILD CARE SAMPLING ACTIVITIES

The EPA began a sampling effort in March 1999 at child care facilities and selected residences in the Omaha metropolitan area. EPA's initial sampling focused primarily on child care facilities because of the high number of children 6 years of age and younger at those locations. Children 6 years and younger are more vulnerable to lead poisoning.

The child care facilities sampled were located primarily east of 45th Street in Omaha, because of information supplied by the Douglas County Health Department indicated that there was a higher frequency

HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAM

Reducing Child Exposure

The EPA and health agencies recommend limiting exposing young children to lead contaminated soil. This can be accomplished in the following ways:

- ! Wash children's hands after playing outside and before meals.**
- ! Wash toys periodically and encourage children not to put toys in their mouths.**
- ! Vacuum and dust inside the home often to remove dust that may have lead in it.**
- ! Use only washed sand, wood chips or other known lead-free materials in outdoor play areas.**

of children with elevated blood lead (EBL) levels in that area.

Out of the first 343 child care facilities sampled, 71 had one or more samples exceeding the 400 parts per million (ppm) health-based action level. EPA has accomplished the initial scope of the site assessment project which began in March, 1999.

RESIDENTIAL SAMPLING ACTIVITIES

EPA has sampled approximately 1700 properties in the Omaha Metropolitan area, including Council Bluffs and Carter Lake, Iowa. Most of the sampled properties are single family dwellings located within 0.3 mile wide corridors radiating from the downtown Omaha area. The results for these properties were mailed to owners and tenants.

EPA is in the process of evaluating the residential results and has not made a determination regarding potential future activities at these properties. Although an “action level” has not been set, EPA has provided property owners with tips for protecting children from potential lead hazards.

EPA will also provide the Douglas County Health Department and the Council Bluffs Health Department with a list of the properties where children younger than 6 years old reside, allowing the health departments to implement an appropriate follow-up plan.

CLEANUP ACTIVITIES

If EPA finds new child cares or EBL properties that exceed the 400 ppm limit, away from the building foundation, EPA will clean up the property at no cost to the property owner. Cleanup actions involve excavating the top layer of soil from the contaminated area(s) of the property and backfilling the yard with clean soil. All excavated areas are being re-vegetated with sod or grass seed.

EPA will restore the yards, as nearly as possible, to their original condition. All removal activity is being conducted at no-cost to the property owner.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you live in Douglas County and suspect that someone in your home has elevated lead levels in their body, EPA recommends that you call Reid Steinkraus with the Douglas County Health Department at (402) 444-7489. Free lead testing is available for any child between the ages of 6 months and 6 years old.

If you live in Council Bluffs and suspect that someone in your home has elevated lead levels in their body, EPA recommends that you call your family doctor and explain your concern. If you do not have a family doctor, please call Donn Dierks with the Council Bluffs Department of Health at (712) 328-4666.

If you have questions about this fact sheet, or need more information about the site, contact:

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